

**ARTIGO** <https://doi.org/10.22481/praxisedu.v15i35.5703>**THE AESTHETICAL LITERACY IN THE CONSOLIDATION OF READING AND  
WRITING OF YOUNG AND ADULT PEASANTS<sup>1</sup>****O LETRAMENTO ESTÉTICO NA CONSOLIDAÇÃO DA LEITURA E DA ESCRITA DE  
JOVENS E ADULTOS CAMPONESES****LA ALFABETIZACIÓN ESTÉTICA EN LA CONSOLIDACIÓN DE LA LECTURA Y LA  
ESCRITURA DE LOS CAMPESINOS JÓVENES Y ADULTOS*****Gustavo Cunha de Araújo***

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**Abstract:** The main objective of this research is to investigate how aesthetic literacy is developed from visual signs and writing to understand the reality of Brazilian youth and adult rural education. This study was based on Historical-Cultural theory and had as a method the Didactic-Formative Experiment. Correcting or alleviating problems that appear in reading and writing, seeking to improve them is a way of thinking about a possibility of multi literacy, in which the aesthetic literacy configures an essential aspect, because in the research, the students started to write better after producing comics books. They improved their writing. This is beautiful, beauty: character of well-done; coherent, defined, with good form.

**Keywords:** Aesthetic Literacy; Arts; Rural Education; Theoretical Thought; Young and Adults Education.

**Resumo:** Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo principal investigar como se desenvolve o letramento estético a partir de signos visuais e da escrita para compreender a realidade do jovem e do adulto brasileiros da Educação do Campo. Este estudo se fundamentou na teoria Histórico-Cultural e teve como método o Experimento Didático-Formativo. Corrigir ou amenizar problemas que aparecem na leitura e na escrita, buscando melhorá-las, é uma forma de pensar numa possibilidade de multiletramentos, na qual o letramento estético configura aspecto essencial, pois na pesquisa realizada,

<sup>1</sup> We thank the Universidade Federal do Tocantins (UFT) for supporting the development of this research, through the Announcement no. 75/2018 of Pro-Rectorry de Research and Post-Graduation (PROPESQ/UFT/Brazil).

os alunos passaram a escrever melhor após produzirem histórias em quadrinhos. Melhoraram a escrita. Isso é belo, beleza: caráter de bem feito; coerente, definida e boa forma.

**Palavras chave:** Letramento Estético; Artes; Educação do Campo; Pensamento Teórico; Educação de Jovens e Adultos.

**Resumen:** Esta investigación tiene como objetivo investigar cómo se desarrolla la alfabetización estética a partir de los signos visuales y la escritura para comprender la realidad de los jóvenes y adultos brasileños en la educación rural. Este estudio se basó en la teoría Histórico-Cultural y tuvo como método el Experimento Didáctico-Formativo. Corregir o mitigar los problemas que aparecen en la lectura y la escritura, buscando mejorarlos, es una forma de pensar sobre una posibilidad de aprendizaje múltiple, en el que la alfabetización estética configura un aspecto esencial, porque en la investigación, los estudiantes comenzaron a escribir mejor después de producir historias en comics. Escritura mejorada. Esto es hermoso, belleza: carácter bien hecho; consistente, definido y en forma.

**Palabras clave:** Alfabetización Estética; Artes; Educación Rural; Pensamiento Teórico; Educación de Jóvenes y Adultos.

## Introduction

Rural Education has been a very problematic subject in Brazil. Although it has achieved significant advances in recent years through public policies such as the Federal Constitution of 1988, the Guidelines and Bases for Education Law no. 9.394/96, the CONFINTEA<sup>2</sup>, the PNE<sup>3</sup> 2014-2024, the National Policy for Rural Education no. 7.352/2010 and programs such as the PRONERA<sup>4</sup> and PROCAMPO<sup>5</sup>, among others, it has been facing many challenges regarding access and permanence of the young people and adults in the university, in the expansion and qualification of their offer in Brazilian education, in the guarantee and continuity of education to these students, in addition to a teaching that is effectively aimed at the reality and specificities of the student, which transforms both the student and the teacher, since we understand that the class has a character of intentionality and is a practical action that should modify both the student and the teacher. However, when dealing with these students' reading and writing, the challenges become even greater.

Our thesis is that comics, as a broader form of literacy since they consist of written and visual signs from a sequence of images, contribute to the consolidation and improvement of the reading and writing processes of young and adult students from rural education. Indeed,

<sup>2</sup> International Conference on Adult Education.

<sup>3</sup> National Education Plan.

<sup>4</sup> National Program of Education on Land Reform.

<sup>5</sup> Higher Education Support Program or the Graduation in Rural Education.

aesthetic literacy can help these students, or even the illiterate ones, to understand a text that, consisting only of letters and words, would be virtually impossible for them to understand.

In this sense, we have the hypothesis that the youth and the adults of Rural Education understand their reality from visual signs and the writing of comics books, which allow them to humanize and transform the reality of which they are part of them as historical subjects. With this statement, it is possible to say that this language promotes the development of reading and writing, since learning to write in association with symbols, both in the form of drawings and letters and words, can improve and develop one's psychological functions, leading him/her to become aware of their own reality. It is important to point out that from the perspective of Historical-Cultural theory, learning is a development factor.

Based on these initial considerations, we objective, mainly, to investigate how aesthetic literacy develops from visual signs and writing to understand the reality of the youth and adults of the Rural Education. This study was based on the Historical-Cultural theory and had as method the Didactic-Formative Experiment developed in the Comics Discipline, in the undergraduate degree in Rural Education, at the Universidade Federal do Tocantins (UFT), Tocantinópolis campus, Brazil. The subjects studied were young and adults students from the same course<sup>6</sup>, from 2016 to 2017.

In this path, however, we seek to characterize and reveal the importance of aesthetic literacy for the development of the higher psychological functions of youth and adult peasant, revealed in the sections of this article.

### **Methodological Course**

The researched participants were part of the undergraduate degree in Rural Education, from the Universidade Federal do Tocantins. Data were collected during the course of Comics. At the time of the research, 36 (thirty-six) of the 40 (forty) students enrolled were interviewed, who signed the Informed Consent Form - ICF - willingly participating in this research. However, it is noteworthy that all students enrolled this course, but these 36 (thirty-six) cited were the ones that gave me the interviews, which in a universe of 40 (forty) students, from a statistical point of view, is highly significant.

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<sup>6</sup> According to Cavalcante, Santos and Moraes (2018), in 2010, the Brazilian rural population was approximately 30 million people. In order to attend to the people of the countryside, there were, as reported by the official data, more than 280 thousand teachers working only in rural basic schools. It is noteworthy that only 36% of this total number of teachers had a college degree.

The young and adult subjects of the Rural Education course with a degree in Rural Education from the Universidade Federal do Tocantins, Tocantinópolis campus, participants of the research, came from different regions of the state and also from the state of Maranhão. They live in settlements, *quilombola* communities, indigenous villages, in the city itself and other locations. They bring a wide experience of life marked by a rich and significant culture of their community, although they go through great social, economic and political inequalities.

Table 1. Research participants: youth and adults peasants from the UFT/Tocantinópolis (Rural Education Undergraduate Course).

Name <sup>7</sup>	Age	City or Community/State/Country
A1	27 years old	Tocantinópolis, Tocantins, Brazil
A2	35 years old	Angico, Tocantins, Brazil
A3	22 years old	Tocantinópolis, Tocantins, Brazil
A4	43 years old	Darcinópolis, Tocantins, Brazil
A5	35 years old	São Pedro dos Crentes, Maranhão, Brazil
C1	27 years old	Santa Terezinha do Tocantins, Tocantins, Brazil
C2	31 years old	Quilombola de Cocalinho, Tocantins, Brazil
C3	32 years old	Cidelândia, Tocantins, Brazil
C4	20 years old	Tocantinópolis, Tocantins, Brazil
C5	41 years old	Amarante, Tocantins, Brazil
D1	36 years old	Distrito de Araguañópolis-TO
E1	30 years old	Araguatins, Tocantins, Brazil
E2	27 years old	Aguiarnópolis, Tocantins, Brazil
E3	44 years old	Palmeiras do Tocantins, Tocantins, Brazil
E4	34 years old	Santa Terezinha do Tocantins, Tocantins, Brazil
E5	22 years old	Santa Terezinha do Tocantins, Tocantins, Brazil
G1	24 years old	Distrito de Natal, Tocantins, Brazil
G2	37 years old	Palmeiras do Tocantins, Tocantins, Brazil
G3	23 years old	Amarante, Tocantins, Brazil
I1	50 years old	Axixá do Tocantins, Tocantins, Brazil
I2	29 years old	Chácara Palmeiras (Araguatins), Tocantins, Brazil
J1	23 years old	Tocantinópolis, Tocantins, Brazil
J2	48 years old	Tocantinópolis, Tocantins, Brazil
J3	32 years old	Aldeia <i>Apinaye</i> , (Indigenous Village), Tocantins, Brazil
L1	35 years old	Axixá do Tocantins, Tocantins, Brazil
L2	25 years old	Tocantinópolis, Tocantins, Brazil
L3	31 years old	Projeto Assentamento Água Branca, Tocantins, Brazil
L4	28 years old	Santa Terezinha do Tocantins, Tocantins, Brazil
M1	24 years old	Nazaré, Tocantins, Brazil
M2	42 years old	Palmeiras do Tocantins, Tocantins, Brazil
M3	20 years old	Tocantinópolis, Tocantins, Brazil
M4	42 years old	Palmeiras do Tocantins, Tocantins, Brazil
N1	27 years old	Santa Terezinha do Tocantins, Tocantins, Brazil

<sup>7</sup> The names of young and adult peasants were designated by the first letter of each name to respect their anonymity and Ethics for Human Sciences research.

R1	21 years old	Tocantinópolis, Tocantins, Brazil
R2	29 years old	Santa Fé do Araguaia, Tocantins, Brazil
S1	40 years old	Tocantinópolis, Tocantins, Brazil
S2	39 years old	Angico, Tocantins, Brazil
T1	20 years old	Tocantinópolis, Tocantins, Brazil

Source: Prepared by the author (2016).

There is significant diversity<sup>8</sup> in the researched individuals. They are part of different ethnic groups, genders, religions, different peasant communities, have different ways of living and producing their livelihood. They are characterized as “small farmers, *quilombolas*, indigenous people, fishermen, peasants, settlers, resettled, river dwellers, people of the forest, hicks, landowners, agrarians, *caboclos*, sharecroppers, rural workers and other groups [...]”. (CALDART, 2011, p. 153). They struggle to transform the reality of which they are part, a reality ruled by great social inequality and contradictions. However, by transforming it, they become able to insert themselves critically into society, because it is in the reality transformation that the humanization process of this people is resumed, and has in education the means to reach it.

However, in order for this process to take place, it is necessary to seek new means that enable the Rural Education young and adult students to understand and advance in curricular contents. This advance is only possible from a study activity<sup>9</sup> that drives this development. In this sense, the Didactic-Formative Experiment is related to this type of activity, by proposing the development of the higher psychological functions of students in education, a theory advocated by Vygotsky, Davydov and collaborators, and developed in this research. Consequently, the Didactic-Formative Experiment allowed us to plan the activities we would like to research and execute with the students, and to set them in motion from the tasks performed.

It is worth mentioning that the activity that the student realized was a comic book from the production of verbal texts and drawings. Therefore, we understand in this research the comics books as a study activity, which enables the development of the higher psychological functions of young and adult peasants from comic book readings and drawings.

<sup>8</sup> However, this diversity and differences do not erase the identity of the young and adult people living in the countryside, since they only try to overcome the ills that society imposes on them, such as social, cultural, political and economic discrimination (CALDART, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> The study activity is based on the formation of concepts that occurs in learning (DAVYDOV, 1988). It refers to the spontaneous concepts (present before the child goes to school) and the scientific concepts (already existing and that join to the spontaneous concepts throughout schooling). However, the teacher must plan and organize a teaching (developmental didactic), which enables students to perform different tasks and actions so that they can develop these concepts and thus advance their learning and mature their higher psychological functions.

In the same perspective pointed out by Sforzi (2015) and Puentes and Longarezi (2013), Libâneo (2016) mentions that Davydov sought to elevate Vygotsky's studies on the formation of concepts and generalizations to another level. Thus, in his studies, he found that the content of the study activity of the students is theoretical knowledge, since he concluded that teaching based only on empirical, descriptive and classificatory knowledge taught in schools was not enough for learning. It was from this point on that Davydov (1988) developed ideas and presuppositions for a teaching focused on the development of theoretical thought, which should occur through the passage from the abstract to the concrete.

Davydov (1988) understood that the organization of teaching required a method that, from the assumptions of Historical-Cultural theory, should pursue the development of students' thinking. He emphasizes that one of the main characteristics of this method is the active intervention of the researcher in the mental processes under study.

In this sense, we understand the Didactic-Formative Experiment as being:

[...] active intervention of the researcher in the mental processes he studies. In this respect, it differs substantively from the observation experiment that focuses only on the state, already formed and present of a particular mental formation. The realization of the formative experiment presupposes the projection and modeling of the content of new mental formations to be constituted, of the psychological and pedagogical means and of the ways of its formation. (DAVYDOV, 1988, p. 108).

Aquino (2017) corroborates this statement by saying that this method's main assumption is that the teaching-learning-development process can boost the quality of student learning and development. Aquino clarifies that it proves the thesis of Vygotsky and his collaborators, as regards the developmental teaching of higher psychological processes as a field of study in education; in effect, it is based on Didactics. Moreover, for this theorist, this method makes it possible to study mental processes of students in a situation of learning at school.

Based on the understanding of this method by Aquino (2017), which we consider to have been the most appropriate for the elaboration of the methodological procedures of this research, we constructed the Didactic-Formative Experiment from the four stages proposed by him: a) Review of the literature and diagnosis of the reality to be studied; b) Elaboration of the experimental didactic system; c) Development of the Didactic-Formative Experiment; d) Analysis of the data and preparation of the final text of the research, as can be seen in the Table below:



Table 1 - Experimental Didactic System.

Didactic-Formative Experiment		
1 <sup>st</sup> Stage	Theoretical research and diagnosis of the studied reality (Rural Education in Tocantins, Brazil)	We performed the bibliographic review from the Historical-Cultural theory, which allowed us to understand the essence of the researched reality.
2 <sup>nd</sup> Stage	Elaboration of the Didactic-Formative Experiment	The experiment was based on the Teaching Plan of the Comics Discipline, with the purpose of proposing advances in the contents worked, from the Historical-Cultural theory.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Stage	Development of the Didactic-Formative Experiment	The experiment was developed in 10 (ten) experimental classes in the Comics Discipline, with study tasks that were performed by the young and adult students of the Rural Education.
4 <sup>th</sup> Stage	Categorization, discussion and analysis of the data generated in the experiment	The data were produced in the experimental classes (reports of the semistructured and individual interviews made with the class students, observations of these classes and comics books produced by them) and analyzed through Historical-Cultural theory.

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on Aquino (2017).

In addition to this, the experiment allowed us to verify the development of the students and their new intellectual formations from this experiment. Moreover, this method enabled us, as researchers, to intervene in the psychic formations of the peasant students and in the didactic and pedagogical processes constructed throughout the experimental classes.

### Discussion and Analyses

The studies on literacy by authors such as Kleiman; Sato (2016), Kleiman (1995), Rojo (2009), Stefanello (2017) and Street (2014) helped us to characterize aesthetic literacy. These studies were important because they helped to broaden the understanding of what literacy is, in dialogue with the art and the Historical-Cultural theory developed in this research. Although some theorists deal with literacy in early childhood education, we found that it is possible to discuss new forms of literacy in education with the young and adult subjects of the Rural Education, because, as Vygotsky (1999) said, the concepts should not be unique, immutable, they should be constantly reviewed.

In this sense, it is possible to observe in these authors different ways of conceptualizing what is literacy, however, with a similarity: literacy is understood as a social and cultural practice that involves reading, writing and speaking in different contexts, such as those involving young people and adults. From this definition, we can understand aesthetic literacy as something that broadens this conception, by inserting art in the processes of reading and writing of young and adult peasants.

In the cycle being discussed, in recent decades there has been an intense mobilization to fight for the right to education of rural populations, involving civil entities, universities, social movements and the public government, demanding the overcome of social inequality, the right to education and better working conditions of individuals who live in the countryside. These are important guidelines present in the debates on rural education that still need to be strengthened.

Rural Education is a concept under construction<sup>10</sup> and has been expanded over the years. Besides having its roots in popular education, it is an educational movement<sup>11</sup> organized by rural workers and social movements<sup>12</sup> that seek quality education meeting the peasant population, as well as their needs and knowledge, and strives for the transformation of social conditions of life in the rural environment (CALDART, 2012; 2011). The Rural Education subjects are from different places and have great popular knowledge regarding their culture. They are family farmers, riverine people, *quilombolas*, extractivists, artisanal fishermen, settlers of agrarian reform, indigenous peoples, the *caiçaras*, as well as those who produce their material conditions of existence through work in the countryside (BRASIL, 2010). Its main characteristics can be summarized as it follows:

It is a social struggle for rural workers' access to education [...] combining the struggle for education with the struggle for land, land reform, the right to work, culture, food sovereignty, and territory. For this reason, its original relationship with the social movements of workers, the [...] questions that society poses [...] cannot be resolved outside the terrain of social [...] contradictions, the school has been a central object of the pedagogical struggles and reflections of Rural Education for what it represents in the challenge of formation of workers [...] the educators are considered fundamental subjects of the pedagogical formulation and the transformations of the school. (CALDART, 2012, p. 263).

As a category of analysis in the educational sphere, the Rural Education also seeks to discuss practices and public policies aimed at rural workers, even those developed elsewhere and under different names, having in the countryside-politics-education relationship the basis

<sup>10</sup> Its concept involves categories such as territory, space, work, education and politics, but it is also marked by contradictions in the historical moment itself that has been discussed and constituted since its inception (CALDART, 2008). Regarding the concept of Rural Education, see also Costa and Cabral (2016).

<sup>11</sup> A movement known as “Toward a Rural Education”, which emerged to stop the non-recognition of previous governments to the people of the countryside as a subject of politics and pedagogy, is sufficient for the view of those who conceive of the countryside as a space for commodity and slavery (CALDART, 2011).

<sup>12</sup> Among the popular social movements are the MST (Landless Rural Workers Movement), which emerged in 1984 and has been fighting for decades to expand and improve the schools of settlements and camps, in addition to participating in teacher training projects for the countryside. Other movements such as the MAB (Dam-Affected Movement), the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT), the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG), the Basic Ecclesial Movement (MEB) and the MMC (Peasant Women's Movement) also have their importance in the field of rural education.



for guiding questions about peasant reality (CALDART, 2012). Thus, understanding this reality and diversity and problematizing it in the educational and scientific realm should not be considered neutral, unimportant; on the contrary, it must be present in the reflections produced in educational research.

In this scenario, Rural Education has been struggling to assume its leading role in Brazilian higher education, trying to articulate popular knowledge, that is, the knowledge and experiences of young and adult peasants with scientific knowledge, creating new forms of research, new objects. It also involves subjects such as *quilombolas*, indigenous peoples, among others, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, which is extremely important for thinking and proposing new public policies that contribute to the advancement of rural education in Brazilian society. From this context of discussion and analysis, we socialized some results of this research developed with young and adult rural education students.

These peasants build knowledge through different means and one of them is by the art, because, in addition to being an area of knowledge, therefore, human knowledge, art provides a creative learning that leads the student to develop full form their mental actions, from a study activity, primary for the thought development. Being an essentially human production, contributing to the production of meanings in the teaching/learning process and being present at different times in life, art is important for education, therefore, necessary for life.

In this sense, we seek to reveal in this research that it is possible to develop aesthetic literacy from the comics, by using visual signs and writing to understand the reality of youth and adult rural education through a study activity that enables them to develop their higher psychic functions; therefore, advance in learning and awareness once these students become involved in art. This formative and developmental role has in the Historical-Cultural theory the main dialogue for the reflections, arguments and analyzes built in this research.

### ***The story texts produced by the young and adult peasants***

The creative activities offered to young and adult peasant students through comic books enabled them to deal with the skill of drawing, that was, as well as challenging, motivating for the most significant of them, who felt challenged in being able to draw their stories and visually tell the world what their peasant reality is like. However, this was only possible due to the solution of the problem situations proposed throughout the experiment, for example in the construction of the drawings and story texts.

The visual and verbal signs worked on in the comics books by the students helped them to develop their thinking. In this analysis, it is possible to conclude that they produced concepts rather than representations, since the concept emerges as “mental activity through which the idealized object and the system of its relations are reproduced [...]”. (DAVYDOV, 1988, p. 128). Under a different explanation, the young and adult students of Rural Education mentally reproduced the content, and this led them to understand and explain the object, comprehending its essence.

When we started the Didactic-Formative Experiment with the young and adult students, we made it clear in the teaching plan that at a given moment of the study tasks, the textual production of the stories would begin. This moment would occur soon after the theoretical contents of reading and writing had been worked with the students, always trying to follow the movement from the abstract to the concrete, that is, in a dialectical and non-traditional perspective.

In the story created by the R2 student of the *Cocalinho quilombola* community in Santa Fé do Araguaia, Tocantins, Brazil, she shows a little of how difficult the reality of the young and adult peasants is:

Board 1 – Text of the comic strip of the student R2.

	<p style="text-align: center;">The girl with the rice bag backpack</p> <p>In a small village lived a girl named R2<sup>13</sup>. Every day the girl went to school, with her school supplies in a little bag of rice tied with a piece of string, always when she arrived at school she asked for a new backpack, but always received the same answer.</p> <p>R2: Daddy you give me a new backpack so that I take my notebook.</p> <p>Father: Daughter daddy has no money now but one day I promise I give to you.</p> <p>R2: All right, Dad.</p> <p>The little girl who was kind of grateful because she realized that her parents did not have the conditions to buy her backpack, conformed because she knew that every week she could change her purse, because in her school there was a dispute on the more ornate rice bags, all her classmates had the bag of rice as backpack.</p>
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<sup>13</sup> The name of the student was modified in order to preserve her anonymity and to comply with the ethical principles of research with human beings.

Texto da História em Quadrinhos  
 Título: A menina da mochila de sacco de arroz  
 Autor(a): [assinatura]  
 Data: 26/08/2016  
 Nome: \_\_\_\_\_

Em um pequeno povoado morava uma menina chamada [nome] todos os dias a menina levava a escola, com seus materiais dentro de um saquinho de arroz amarrado com um pedaço de cordão, sempre quando chegava da escola [nome] pedia uma nova mochila seu pai mais sempre recebia a mesma resposta.

[nome]: papai não me dar uma mochila nova para me levar meu caderno.  
 Pai: filha papai não tem dinheiro agora mais um dia eu prometo lhe dar.  
 [nome]: tudo bem papai.

A menina meio que conformada aguardava pois parecia que seus pais não tinham condições de comprar sua mochila, conforme da pais sabia que toda semana podia ter um saquinho, porém sua escola tinha disputa de saquinhos de arroz mais empilhados todos seus colegas tinha o saquinho de arroz como mochila.

Um certo dia [nome] chega da escola seu pai a chama.  
 Pai: [nome] olha lá filha.  
 [nome]: sim papai.

Então ele a entrega uma sacola com um objeto dentro, então a menina abre seu desejo realizando uma linda mochila de cor vermelha. [nome] ficou tão feliz que não conseguia se conter de tanta felicidade.

Na manhã seguinte [nome] vai a escola com sua linda mochila vermelha, todos seus colegas pede para ver, daí [nome] percebe que seus colegas continuam com seus saquinhos de arroz e sente-se triste por ser a única que tinha uma mochila de verdade. Ela percebe que na tão sonhada mochila não era mais importante porque apenas ela com uma mochila.

No dia seguinte [nome] chega a escola com sua mochila nova e continua com seus materiais no saquinho de arroz deixando de lado sua linda mochila. Alguns dias depois a escola do

In a certain day R2 arrives from school, her father calls her.

Father: R2 come here daughter.

R2: Yes Dad.

Then he hands her a bag with an object inside. Then the girl has her wish come true, a beautiful red backpack. R2 was so happy that she could not contain herself with such happiness.

The next morning R2 goes to school with her beautiful red backpack. All his colleagues asks to see, hence R2 realizes that his colleagues continues with their rice bags and feels sad to see that only she had a real backpack. She realizes that her long-dreamed backpack was not important anymore because only she had a backpack.

The next day R2 arrives at school without her new backpack and continues with her materials in the rice bag leaving aside the beautiful backpack. Some time later the village school through a municipal benefit earns a grant to purchase complete uniforms for students, clothes, notebook, eraser pencil and backpack. From then everyone stopped using the plastic rice bag and started to carry their school supplies in their new backpacks.

This is a true story that happened in the *quilombola* community of Cocalinho, Tocantins, at the Emanuel municipal school.

And R2 is me, and this is my story.



Source: Produced by the student R2.

As it can be seen, the sociocultural context of the student reflects the sociocultural conditions to which peasant students are subjected. In addition, the student reports a real story, lived by her while attending school, ruled by great difficulty and numerous challenges that did not make her give up her studies, contrary to what happens with most young people and peasants.

It is also possible to observe in the story told by the *quilombola* student that the comic books allowed her to reveal her life in the countryside, the existing contradictions, to understand what occurs in her social and cultural environment, her living and human conditions, which are not disconnected from the social relations established between her and the people of her conviviality.

This way, in order to reflect and understand this reality, it is necessary to interpret it so that emerges the possibility to intervene and transform it. It was what the student R2 did, by materializing her reality in the comics books, revealing its essence. However, this totality revealed by the reality of this student was only possible to understand it from its contradictions, since it was showed in the story that the peasant, from a very early age, comes across the life in clemencies, such as the lack of place to live, constant struggle for Land Reform, without adequate conditions to study, in addition to a rural school that is generally very precarious and traditional. These problems, which are actually constructed by society, designs the individual of the countryside as who does not have the right to work, study and remain in the place he chose to build his life, but also designs this subject as who should not participate in decisions of his country, denying what is his/hers by right.

Their performance in history, as well as their culture and identity, are stopped by those who understand that education does not need to listen to their voices, people who contribute so much to the growth of the country. Society forgets or denies that it is the peasant who

plants, cultivates, and harvests the food that supplies the Brazilian population, what is not showed by the capitalism that only thinks of generating profits for itself. It is necessary to confront the way in which education is given to the rural people by the ruling social classes, because one cannot throw away or lose the achievements and advances of Rural Education achieved in recent years by those who strive for quality education and adequate to peasant reality.

We live a moment in the history of the class struggle where there is a hegemony of capital over labor. This reflects the limits of pointing out the future prospects for the working class. In education, this is not different. Today we see in *Todos pela Educação* a class articulation, of the ruling class, which sees in education “a great deal”. (KOMINKIÉWICZ; D’AGOSTINI, 2018, p. 729).

In this analysis, it is important that the rural school be a project focused on the rural reality, avoiding to reproduce “urbanity” that, in fact, is not part of its culture and tradition. To this end, the rural school must work with countryside-oriented content, with appropriate methodologies and with alternation as its foundation.

It is important to point out that the school and the university are excluding at the moment when deny the rights of these students to access and remain in them, when they do not consider their reality, when they impose knowledge that is said to be “true” and do not respect the specificities and knowledge of their students.

In addition, it is also possible to say that the stories constructed by these individuals helped them to become aware of the rural reality, revealed in the words, phrases, paragraphs and drawings that they themselves produced, being the authors of their works. In fact, to show the social and production relations established by them and the contradictions present in the countryside, in the school and in the university, place them as important historical subjects who, rather than understanding reality, try to intervene in it.

Furthermore, we would like to corroborate that the reading and analyses of these stories show the thinking and doing as historical, because they are social practices that change constantly. That is why development takes place dialectically, because it is always preparing for the next stage of advancement and change. As a consequence of this process, the tasks and actions that the young and adult students of Rural Education provide for their social environment enables them to develop their thinking. Faced with this assertion, it is possible to affirm that education develops its higher psychological functions.



### *The visual language of Comics Books*

Working with comic book production involves not only improving the reading and writing processes of young people and adults in the Rural Education, but also understanding how they develop their visual perception through signs they learned to use during the Didactic-Formative Experiment.

The visual language of comics books had from the creativity of the young and the adult peasant a significant element to record several aspects of their life, as they were able to create and tell true and fictitious (imaginative) stories from their experiences with the countryside by the artistic bias. In fact, many Rural Education students who produced their stories did so in these two ways.

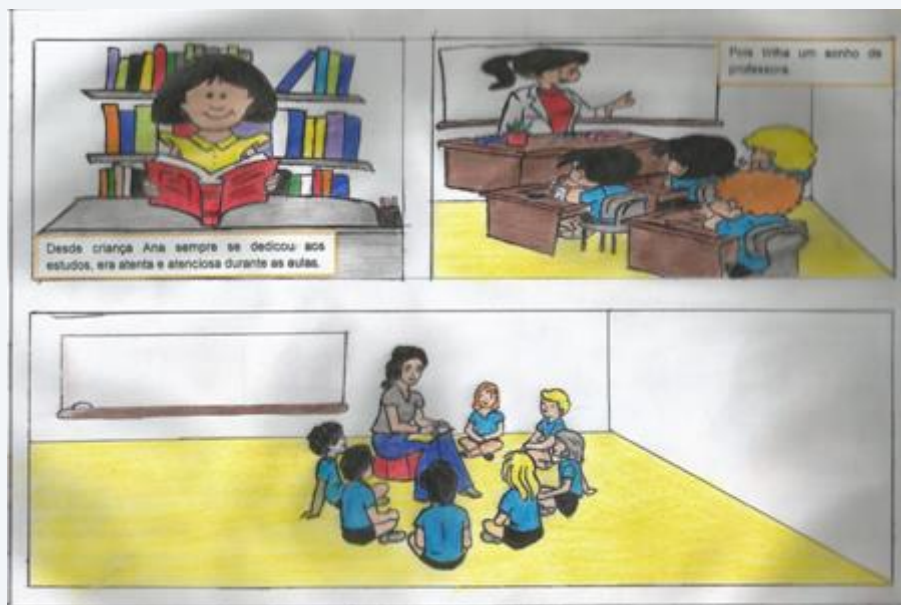
On the other hand, being a teacher of the countryside and making a difference in the students' lives is a dream of some young and adult people of the Rural Education, as in the comic book produced by the student E5. The sequence of his comic book shows not only this dream aimed to be materialized after finishing the graduation course, but visually reports the difficulties that devastate most of the Basic Education schools located in rural areas: lack of teaching materials and school meals, infrastructure inadequate classrooms, sometimes without water available to drink, are just some of the many problems that exist in the Brazilian countryside and that influence the learning of that student who constantly wakes up at dawn to reach the school or university, traveling miles away.

This is what the comic book produced by E5 is about and presented as it follows:

Figure 1 – Excerpt from a comic story produced by the student E5.







Source: Produced by the student E5.

The difficulties and problems pointed out in this story are due to the low investments that the public power has been making in the rural schools, evidencing the disinterest and disregard of it to the peasant people who live and work on the land, understood as territory of life.

This analysis instigates to think of the way Rural Education in Brazil has been discussed and treated. A little provocative, if we look at a current context that is marked by several reductions in investments in public policies, affecting education, health, work and other sectors. For decades it has been ruled in the official documents that education is a right for all, that education must take place at all levels of basic education, including in the Rural Education, but in practice there is a contradiction in the effectiveness of these policies in the educational scenario, especially in this area, as can be seen by the closure of rural schools in different parts of the country, low financial investment in this modality, little attractiveness on the part of teachers who work for it and when they are under action, it is easy to find a teacher who is there more like a “freelancer” or who does not have specific training to act in the Rural Education, besides the lack of didactic materials adapted to the reality of the young and the adult students, precarious infrastructure, so that returning to school to continue one’s studies ends up being a double challenge for this student: to come across a reality and methodologies different from his/her needs and interests, with proposals of contents and superficial subjects, and to be inserted in practices of reading and writing so that the student becomes a “citizen” of rights, just like learning to sign his/her own name. And this, in a society that is increasingly

dominated by the elites, becomes a great challenge for the young people and the working adult in the countryside.

However, the interpretation of reality that we make here was possible from the comprehension of the visual language constructed by the student in the pages of her comic book related to her life context and social production, that offered greater dynamism, emotion and expressiveness for the story and, as Vygotsky (2009) reminds us, has in interaction with other people and in the internalization of the visual and verbal signs, the core to the development of their higher psychological functions.

As noted in her visual text, the student E5 interfered in her reality and modified it, which is fundamental for the rural school to be strengthened and to be an increasingly defendant of the right to education of peasant populations, since this institution is not only for teaching, but it is a place where the identity, culture and art of the peasant are present. In this way, to consider the totality of which this subject is constituted in the social and historical course of humanity, as well as his/her knowledge, work and struggle for land, it is fundamental to elaborate public policies for the formation of teachers for rural areas.

However, an important aspect in the comic book drawings analyzed here deserves to be highlighted. These signs reveal a range of information that helps us to understand in a more objective way the stories told by the young and adult people of the Rural Education. They bring a diversity of themes and images that, combined with words, enrich the story and help in its communication. Regardless, in order for this process to occur fully and to raise the capacity to materialize on paper what it thinks, the visual memory built up in life experiences and in the interaction of the student with other people also helps in the advancement of his learning in the university, since

The true essence of human memory lies in the fact of being able to actively remember with the help of signs. It can be said that the basic characteristic of the human behavior in general it is that the human beings themselves influence their relation with the environment and, through this environment, personally modify their behavior, placing it under their control. (VYGOTSKY, 2007, p. 50).

Many of the produced drawings reveal visually not only the rural life, but the creativity of its authors/artists. As they developed the ability to draw from a study activity, they corroborate Marx's thesis that art, as essentially human creation, was only possible when humanity fabricated instruments to create drawings of its reality, raising its thinking.

What we mean is that the visual language of comics books provided the young and the adult of the Rural Education course to develop their psychic formations, from signs they did not know. In other words, the students formed their psyche through art and, at the same time, developed a new aesthetic perception.

The signs of the drawings were what they did little to develop consciousness. Faced with this, they used the signs (tools) they knew how to use! We taught another tool for them to develop consciousness, since the sign was mediation between them and us and between them and reality, but not the reality of nature, but their working relations with other people.

The creativity of the young and the adult of the Rural Education should be understood as something new, original, as they developed verbal and visual histories from study tasks that led them to advance in content, especially when they internalized the signs that mediated to the capacity to write and draw these stories. In this way, the act of creating has in the development of the human mind the core to understanding and interpreting reality.

In this sense, it is possible to affirm that the signs used in the comics books produced new forms of thought in the young and adult students of the Rural Education, participants in this research, important so that knowledge can be produced and expanded in the educational sphere.

### ***The reading development of the young and adult peasant student***

Comic books help to improve the orality of written texts. With this statement, we understand that both word and design are important for the young and the adult students of Rural Education to broaden their understanding of written and visual language, fundamental to mature their higher psychic functions and fully develop their academic writings and, at last, the literacy. By thinking dialectically, this learner can understand how signs relate in the text and how they produce meaning and information in their social and cultural context, so necessary to overcome a capitalist hegemonic teaching that does not consider their constructed knowledge.

Aiming to broaden the analysis of the interviews regarding comics books, we asked young people and adults peasants if this language helped to improve their verbal reading (words, letters, phrases). These were his answers:

*Quite a lot, it helped much. Because creating the story is not the hardest, it's you putting together the comic book, right [...] so you have to use the comma in the right place, point and so on. (A1)*

*Yes, it has improved a lot because when you're there doing it you read and re-read it, you do it again [...] so with every reading you do you have a different view [...] and it's even tricky for you to reach a certain end because sometimes you read, you write, then you read it again and you think it was not good, then it breaks down one more time. (A5)*

*It did. Especially in the question of punctuation. The question [...] when an exclamation comes [...] an endpoint [...] it helped a lot. (C3)*

*Yes [...] teacher, I find it interesting, especially every time I read and re-read it, there was always a mistake, I went there and fixed it. (C5)*

*Mine is done, and I'm still in doubt that it was not good [...] because there is a time I write and I do not know where I use endpoint or exclamation point [...] it helped [...] in a way it did help. (M2)*

*Yes, because it made me go back to the past, my childhood history [...] I have a great reading [...] another worldview. (R2)*

Almost all the young and adults interviewed claimed that comics books helped to develop their verbal reading, as they reported that reading and re-reading the texts they produced repeatedly enabled them to identify spelling, concordance and punctuation errors in their stories, which made them correct these texts, learn new words and understand the meaning of the text they wrote. Besides, the report of the student R2 emphasizes that life experience of the young and the adult is also present in the stories written and told through art.

Furthermore, it is possible to affirm that this development was only possible from the study activity carried out by them in the experiment, because it was in it that the young and adults of the Rural Education course developed their mental processes, essential for their consciousness formation. Indeed, the development of their verbal reading is directly related to the internalization of the theoretical knowledge they have learned in the accomplishment of the tasks of this activity, necessary for them to arrive at theoretical thinking. In addition, they were able to overcome the errors and difficulties presented during the construction of their stories, important for advancing in learning.

In light of this thinking, Luria (1992) corroborates that writing is a good example of an activity that requires cultural and non-organic tools to be encoded in the human brain during the development of its psychic functions, because

*[...] the person who writes has to transpose the isolated phonetic unit to its graphic or visual symbol, must choose a visual sign from the many existing ones [...] in the next stage, the visual images of letters are transformed into motor acts [...] finally, writing, like any activity, needs a constant plan or*

purpose, and continuous feedback on the action results. (LURIA, 1992, p. 147-148).

The excerpt above corroborates that working with comics books is a relevant and significant way of improving the writing of the peasant learner, since, as language and culture, it develops the learner's awareness in dealing with issues pertinent to his/her environment, such as struggle for land, an education that is in and out of the countryside, appreciation of the teachers who work in the rural schools, as well as the young and adult worker who builds his/her life and makes him/herself present in the story.

However, Vygotsky (2001) clarifies that verbal thinking is not born with the person. Rather, it develops in the process of interaction of it with its historical and cultural mean. In this sense, although written language is a very frequent and widespread way of communication in society, it should not be understood as the only way for the person to communicate, because there is a diversity of languages, such as the visual one.

In the sequence, we asked if the comics books helped them to better develop their visual reading (images). The interviewees answered the following:

*Yes [...] it has improved. And, teacher, I do not know if it was because of the story I created, that was something I lived, then when I looked at that first drawing I showed you, I saw that it really was that way it happened. (C5)*

*Yes, because it is the following [...] from what we draw, you have a reading of the images that you are doing [...] if it was good or not you cut and do it again [...] so I used almost one ream of 200 sheets to make this drawing [...] I drew it all before making these comics [...] so I drew the page that was going to be the one, so what I did not like, I erased, tore the sheet up and did it all over again [...] it was a lot of work. (A5)*

*It Improved teacher, because I found that some forms of drawing depend a lot on what you're imagining. (L3)*

*Yes, because I had to look at the expression of the person, if she is happy, sad [...] things like this [...] it helped a lot. (M2)*

*Definitely, because today I see images with different eyes [...] I can perceive some details that images bring with them. (R2)*

Great part of the students say that comics books helped to make a visual reading of texts, which is important for developing the processes of reading and writing and, consequently, for their aesthetic perception. In this analysis, it is important to highlight that the contents experienced and assimilated by them were important to develop as their higher psychological assignments, since the appropriate visual signs they used mediated the

communication with the world around, which enabled to modify and question the reality, advancing in learning.

The visual signs of comics books allowed the young and adult students of the Rural Education to better understand the facial expressions, gestures and other characteristics of the stories told and constructed by them. Therefore, the pictures in the comics books are extremely revealing because they show how the characters are characterized, in fact, as well as in what scenarios the stories were developed and in which context they are analyzed.

It was in this course that these students established social relations between themselves and the way of their people's production, recorded in words and drawings. This was also very important for the awareness of the reality of which they are part.

By contributing to the development of the students' visual reading, by enabling them to broaden their reading skills to the story images, in this case with the drawings made out, associated with the visual elements of comics books such as balloons, onomatopoeias and other elements, comics books are seen as important tools for knowledge the production in the countryside, since they represent not only the essence of the peasant population reality, but also get recorded their stories, which by other possible means, perhaps it could not be reported and socialize people.

The thought development, we want to point out, from the abstract to the concrete, realized by these students in the production of their stories reveals the essence of the thing, that is, the true content of its reality (DAVYDOV, 1988). Therefore, their stories do not show the reality surface that many know and that is not true, but the essence hidden in them (that few know), in evidencing the contradictions present in the Brazilian countryside.

We also added that teacher/researcher mediation in the development of this activity with the young and adult peasants was extremely necessary for them to learn contents they did not know or could not do alone, such as those related to the visual signs characteristic of comics (balloons, onomatopoeias, refinements, subtitles and others). We want to say that learning from the experience of the other is a basic premise for the development of the higher psychic functions in the perspective of Historical-Cultural theory. In this way, learning new signs from the comics books gave the peasants involved in the research a little more advance in the learning to read and write, as indicative to represent their reality through art. As a result, they have expanded their ability to read and write.

We verified that comics books improve not only the peasants' reading processes, but their relationship with life. This idea is revealed in their testimonies. The gestures of the



characters and expressions of these created by them, such as a man fishing, a moving car, students entering a school, for example, associated with different types of balloons, written with different letters among others, gave more dynamism in their stories, which allows one to draw more attention to the reader. These actions of expressions constructed by them in the experiment also show that, regardless of the themes of their stories, if they were fictitious or true, they represent not only verbally their realities but visually their life histories. However, for this, it was necessary to develop a story through a sequence of images, a primordial characteristic of this language.

Students also show in their speech that visual reading helps to understand the meaning and sense of the texts they have made. Nevertheless, for this, in their conceptions, it was necessary that the drawings were well made, not necessarily beautiful, but developed by the sequence of images, which, in turn, the comics books do to perfection. Consequently, they had the opportunity to know new words, which in a way, enriched their vocabularies. As far as visual reading is concerned, comics books have broadened their reading skills with the image when used with verbal text and at different times of their lives.

### ***The writing development of the young and adult peasant student***

Since it is a system of verbal and visual signs that help to constitute spoken language in human interaction and communication, words make sense and relate dialectically to the sentences and paragraphs in the text (VYGOTSKY, 2009; 2007). Under this reasoning, comics books have in their visual language an important contribution to expand the writing developed in the stories, allying images and words in their constitution.

Both written language and spoken language are held as knowledge holders by the ruling class which, under its own interests, imposes what is considered true and absolute. Thus, those people who do not dominate them are socially disregarded, isolate themselves and add themselves to the classes discredited and excluded by capitalist society, in which the numerous peasants are inserted. In this thought, reading and writing end up being a revolution for them, because, through these skills, they manage to survive the world that is becoming more and more literate, but contradictory to their reality. And, that is why we understand that art has the power to reveal the essence of things, to show the true truth and to contribute to the young and the adult students of the Rural Education, producing their social relations, materials and knowledge of their people.

Concerning the writing development, we asked the peasants if comics books helped them to develop their writing. The answers were the following:

*It helped, because you write the story, read it, review what is missing, which words are right and which are wrong. By only reading, you are already able to say, "This comma is not right here! It has to come here!", It helped a lot, a lot. (A1)*

*Yes. It improved a lot because every time I read it, I tried to do it better, more cute, well-designed, and tried to fix the mistakes that I found. (C5)*

*It did [...] same as I said, because of the punctuation, then I read and I say: "this here is what, an exclamation [...]", then I read, I look at the faces of the characters, to see punctuation there, if it is asking, affirming. (M2)*

*Yes, because we were drawing and doing texts and so we developed better the writing. (E1)*

*I can say yes, because the more we read, the more we develop writing skills. (E3)*

*It has improve [...] in comics, sometimes we put a word there, and then: "Phew, what is the sign that we use here... it is an exclamation", we shared with colleagues [...] then ask, but I say, I'm not asking, I'm inviting him [...] then what I use is an exclamation. (G3)*

*It helped, because I read and reread the text [...] saw what word was wrong and did it again [...] a comma there [...] it exercised me a lot. (J1)*

*When I did my text I had to rewrite [...] and I saw some mistakes in the rewriting, my text was taking another form [...] so it improved. (N1)*

*Yes. It helped and helps. That activity we made you write and automatically visualize the scenes, as you organize it there in the comics. (S1)*

*I would not say only writing, but reading. Because comics help us when writing, because we need to adapt to the act of synthesis. Because it is necessary to organize in phrases, in the organization of thought. (S2)*

Most of the students interviewed claimed that the comics books contributed to their writing improvement, as they argued that having to write verbal texts more than once made it possible to identify errors in the writing, similar to what have happened to their reading practices. The fact that they put the words inside comics books, subtitles, balloons or out of them, sometimes with different formats (words with different sizes, some in bold, underlined, upper and lower case) with the purpose of visually developing the verbal story created by them, helped to advance in learning, not only of reading, but of writing as well, because, in addition to knowing new words, visual symbols and other signs, they have developed their

understanding in a more dynamic, objective and conscious way reality in which they were born, live, study and work.

This development of thought formed during the story production, going from the general to the particular, made the writing of these students meaningful, by highlighting their emotions, feelings, lives and contradictions present in the Brazilian countryside. The writing for this countryside subject (*quilombola*, riverside, settled from agrarian reform, hit by dams, indigenous peoples, social movements, among others) is not only an act of communicating with the world around him, but it is a means of doing it, to exercise their citizenship and overcome a pseudo-concrete reality that devastates the peasant territory.

### **Final Considerations**

The research carried out showed that art has an important role in the way of representing the reality and in the consciousness formation of the Rural Education peasants, because being knowledge and human creation, art elevates in a qualitative way the learning of the young and the adult peasant, by giving him/her more autonomy, self-control and criticality in the activities performed in the countryside and in life, as well as in the production of questions and inferences about the tasks carried out and the revelation of contradictions and problems that devastate the Brazilian peasantry. We state this because they have been able to make corrections to the verbal and visual texts, and to report through visual signs such as the living conditions in the countryside, which shows that they have advanced in learning and have taken awareness of this reality.

In this sense, the analyses showed that the development of the aesthetic perception of the young and adult people of the Rural Education was fruit of the internalization of the comics books visual language and the concepts formation, since they were able to explain, argue and solve the study tasks (some with ease, some not so much) listed throughout the experiment, materialized in two ways: through the verbal text and through drawings.

The data also showed that the young and the adult of the Rural Education were not to blame for not learning during their schooling processes, since it is the State that did not offer adequate conditions (schools, infrastructure, curriculum and developmental methodologies) for this individual to learn. Capitalist society itself distorts reality by showing that Brazilian education has improved in this and that has risen in national statistics, but, in essence, it does not reveal that if that peasant reaches the university without being able to interpret a text or make a simple mathematics calculation, that is, he/she finishes school without being able to

learn effectively, and this, much due to a traditional teaching that asks the student to read something and ask what is seen or written on the text.

So, we understand it is important for young people and adults to pass through aesthetic literacy, since it is necessary to consider that the relation between text and images does not imply the same form of saying the same thing, that is, the text seems to mean more when accompanied by an image. The reciprocal also seems true, that is, the images also mean more when accompanied by the writing. In addition to that, correcting or alleviating problems that appear in reading and writing, seeking to improve them, is a way of thinking about a possibility of aesthetic literacy. In this research, students started to write better after producing comics books. They improved writing. That is beautiful, beauty: character of something well done: coherent, defined, with good form.

In a changing society, in which social actors who were once disregarded are now demanding time and voice, reading and writing, influenced by the expanded notion of literacy, assume fundamental roles of exceptional added value for formation and awareness. More than decoding it is necessary to interpret and make decisions; beyond the text, it is necessary to understand the context, which makes possible the understanding of the real, the collaborative action and solidarity and the organized search for daily problem solution.

With this, this research allows to conclude that the term literacy points to a set of social practices in the context of written culture in which subjects can engage. In our understanding, aesthetic literacy is a cultural asset to which children, young people and adults have an inalienable right, and the school and university have a duty to watch for the development of a didactic proposal aimed at bringing the reader closer to the text, since educating is more than schooling or literacy; it is not just decipher the language code. In view of this, we consider that we can no longer postpone the perspective of science in general, of art and culture as components of literacy with the young and adult peasants of the Rural Education.

Strictly, this study has consequences for the organization of the work of producing texts in the Rural Education, in particular, and in education in general, since in traditional school it usually prevails in writing, not being taught to combine different semiotic resources to learn the meaning constitution and production. We also emphasize the importance of aesthetic literacy for the awareness of the reality in which the individual is inserted and for the understanding the role of creative activity for the human personality constitution.

Finally, this research revealed peasant who did not know him/herself: who can read and write competently through art.

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Recebido em: 12 de agosto de 2019  
Aprovado em: 26 de agosto de 2019  
Publicado em: 01 de outubro de 2019